

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Federal Agency Name(s):** Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Department of Commerce
- **Funding Opportunity Title:** Educational Partnership Program (EPP) with Minority Serving Institutions (MSI), Environmental Entrepreneurship Program (EEP)
- **Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement
- **Funding Opportunity Number:** EPP/MSI/EEP 2004
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s):** 11.481 - Educational Partnership Program with Minority Serving Institutions
- **Dates:** Proposals must be received by the EPP Office no later than 5:00 p.m., eastern time on March 15, 2004.
- **Funding Opportunity Description:** The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Educational Partnership Program with Minority Serving Institutions (EPP/MSI) is designed to strengthen the capacity of Minority Serving Institutions to foster student careers, entrepreneurship opportunities and advanced academic degrees in sciences directly related to NOAA's mission. The Environmental Entrepreneurship Program is designed to support education and training programs that engage students in applying the necessary skills, tools, methods and technologies in sciences directly related to NOAA's mission. This includes fostering educational opportunities in coastal, oceanic, atmospheric, environmental sciences, and remote sensing technology coupled with training in economics, marketing, product development, and services to create jobs, businesses and economic development opportunities. The Environmental Entrepreneurship Program promotes partnerships with MSIs, NOAA and the public-private sector.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

NOAA provides science, technology and services to describe and predict changes in the Earth's environment, and conserve and manage wisely the Nation's coastal and marine resources to ensure sustainable economic opportunities. The agency has made a commitment to expand and strengthen its partnerships with Minority Serving Institutions to serve as a means to meet its principal goals of environmental stewardship, assessment, and prediction. In accordance with the policy of the U.S. Department of Commerce and NOAA to foster environmental education and economic sustainability and the agency's mission, the purposes of the NOAA EPP/MSI Environmental Entrepreneurship Program are to support:

1) *Educational and Training Opportunities.* To prepare students at the high school, community college and tertiary levels with the necessary complement of educational opportunities, business acumen and technical skills to enable them to pursue careers, entrepreneurship opportunities and advanced academic study in sciences directly related to NOAA's mission.

2) *Capacity Building.* To develop or enhance the capacity of academic programs at MSIs, directly related to the NOAA sciences, to ensure they are effective pipelines through which students and faculty can gain the necessary experience as a baseline for both educational and training opportunities.

3) *Partnerships.* To facilitate or strengthen MSI partnerships with NOAA programs, laboratories and facilities as required. Partnerships with other colleges, universities, industry, governments (state, local, commonwealth, territorial and tribal), and organizations (public, nonprofit, or private) that foster cooperative educational and training opportunities for students and facilities are strongly encouraged. Academic partners must be colleges or universities. High schools can only participate as sub-awardees of colleges or universities in the High School Science Pipeline Projects component of this notice.

4) *Community Economic Development.* To support MSIs and partners in preparing students with the necessary knowledge,

skills, tools and technologies that may be applied outside the classroom to create minority business enterprise and foster environmentally sustainable and economically viable local communities.

B. Program Priorities

The goal of the NOAA EPP/MSI Environmental Entrepreneurship Program is to strengthen the capacity of Minority Serving Institutions to foster student careers, entrepreneurship opportunities, and advanced academic study in sciences directly related to NOAA. (See <http://epp.noaa.gov/>) Strong linkages or collaborations with NOAA programs, laboratories and facilities are required. Innovative approaches to providing entrepreneurial training and educational opportunities for students are sought that take maximum advantage of synergies and partnerships among high schools, community colleges, other universities, research institutions, industry, government and nongovernmental agencies, and other organizations (public, nonprofit, or private). Partnerships are required that engage students in applied research projects, internships, entrepreneurial and hands-on training experiences, mentored by academic and industry professionals, that will facilitate the entry of MSI students into careers, advanced study and environmental entrepreneurship directly related to NOAA's mission. There is no requirement for an MSI or partner to provide matching funds.

Proposals must be firmly grounded in ``environmental fields'' directly related to NOAA's mission. The term ``environmental fields'' is defined as those environmental, natural sciences (i.e., biology, earth sciences), physical and social sciences (i.e., economics, anthropology, geography, and history), engineering, professional and technical fields that are directly related to NOAA's mission which is to ``describe and predict changes in the Earth's environment, and conserve and manage wisely the Nation's coastal and marine resources.'' (See <http://www.noaa.gov/>) Proposals *must* identify mechanisms to be employed that involve a collaborative approach to enhancing MSIs capacity to foster student opportunities, interest in, and pursuit of careers, entrepreneurship and advanced study in the NOAA sciences. Proposals will be accepted that address:

1. High School Science Pipeline Projects -- approximately three cooperative agreement awards, each up to a total of \$500,000 for a period of three years. Program plans must be developed and implemented that enable Minority Serving Institutions with graduate programs in NOAA-related sciences to establish

collaborative activities/projects that engage students, primarily at the high school level, while simultaneously engaging students at the community college and university level in programs, research and other training opportunities in sciences and technologies that are directly related to NOAA's mission. While the focus of these projects is to high school students, participation by students at community colleges and at the university level is intended to create collaboration among high school students and students attending colleges and universities who are engaged in NOAA-related sciences. Students at the community college and university levels may serve as mentors, tutors or counselors to the high school students in implementing projects.

Engaging students at the high school, community college and undergraduate levels in collaborative training and research projects is intended to increase the number of students trained and engaged in sciences in the high school and community college levels and who go on to complete graduate degrees in NOAA-related sciences. Projects should be designed to provide options for students to focus on research tracks, as well as options to train students with the necessary knowledge, skills, tools and technology that may be applied outside the classroom to create minority business enterprise and promote environmental sustainability and economic viability in their local communities. Projects should engage students in applied research to understand the nature and extent of environmental management within communities and to test and monitor methods for preventing, controlling, and reducing the degradation of natural environments.

Projects must engage a minimum of fifty high school students annually in practical learning experiences, applied research or hands-on training in NOAA's core mission areas, including coastal, oceanic, atmospheric, environmental and remote sensing. MSI Partnerships with NOAA programs, high schools, community colleges, and as necessary, other governmental and non-governmental organizations should train students to participate in environmental issues within their communities that are directly related to NOAA's mission.

2. Environmental Demonstration Projects - approximately three grants or cooperative agreement awards, each up to a total of \$500,000 for a period of two or three years, to support the engagement of MSI students and faculty in hands-on demonstration projects that apply environmentally sound methods and technologies to address real world environmental issues in local

communities that directly relate to the NOAA sciences. Field demonstration projects should include partnerships with NOAA facilities that enable students to address challenging environmental issues such as, but not limited to, enhancing and restoring coastal and estuarine habitats, preventing marine pollution, reducing coastal hazards, assessing marine protected areas, protecting coral reefs, reducing the spread of invasive species, restoring fisheries and fisheries habitat, developing and expanding aquaculture, planning community waterfront revitalization, improving the prediction of weather and climate phenomena, or employing remotely sensed data and information systems to support environmental monitoring and prediction. The demonstration projects should involve students in collaborative field projects that will empower them to pursue careers, entrepreneurship opportunities and advanced academic study. Projects should train students with the necessary knowledge, skills, tools and technology that may be applied outside the classroom to create minority business enterprise and promote environmental sustainability and economic viability in their local communities. Projects should engage students in applied research to understand the nature and extent of environmental degradation within communities and to test and monitor methods for preventing, controlling, and reducing the degradation of natural environments.

C. Program Authority 15 U.S.C. 1540

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

This funding opportunity announces that approximately \$3,000,000 will be available through this announcement for fiscal year 2004. Proposals should be prepared assuming a budget of no more than \$500,000. It is expected that approximately six awards will be made, pending the availability of funds. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds have not yet been appropriated for this program.

B. Project/Award Period

This program announcement is for projects to be conducted by university investigators for up to a three-year period with an anticipated start date of July 1, 2004. Applications must include a scope of work and a budget for the entire award period.

C. Type of funding instrument

The funding instrument for extramural awards will be a cooperative agreement since one or more NOAA components will be substantially involved in implementation of the project. Examples of substantial involvement may include, but are not limited to, proposals for collaboration by NOAA personnel and loaned equipment, to work on proposed projects. EPP/MSI students and research produced through these awards will benefit significantly from a strong collaboration with outside partners.

III. Eligibility Information:

1. Eligible Applicants

For the High School Science project component the eligible MSI must have a graduate program in the relevant NOAA science. Minority Serving Institutions eligible to submit proposals include institutions of higher education identified by the Department of Education as:

- a.** Historically Black Colleges and Universities
- b.** Hispanic-Serving Institutions
- c.** Tribal Colleges and Universities
- d.** Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions

on the most recent ``2003 United States Department of Education Accredited Post-Secondary Minority Institutions'' list:
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/edlite-minorityinst.html>

2. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing is required under this program.

IV. Application and Submission Information

____1. Address to request Application Package.

Applicants may obtain all required application forms through the NOAA grants website at

<http://www.ofa.noaa.gov/%7Egrants/appkit.html> or from Ms. Arlene Simpson Porter, NOAA Grants Management Division, (301) 713-0926 ext. 152, Arlene.S.Porter@noaa.gov

2. Content Form of Application

All proposals must be typewritten on 8.5 x 11 paper in 12-point font and may not exceed 20-pages. The 20 page limit includes signed title page, abstract, project description including all text and any tables and visual materials (such as charts, graphs, maps, photographs and other pictorial presentations), budget and budget justification and all standard application forms. The 20 page limitation does not include literature citation, current and pending support, curriculum vitae and letters of commitment. All information needed for review of the proposal is indicated below; no appendices are permitted.

The following information is included in the 20 page limitation:

a. 1. Signed title page: The title page must be signed by the Principal Investigator and the Institutional Representative and should clearly identify:

2) The project title starting with ``NOAA EPP/MSI: Environmental Entrepreneurship Program:'' followed by the title of the proposal,

3) The NOAA mission area being addressed (i.e., coastal, oceanic, atmospheric, environmental and remote sensing),

4) The Principal Investigator and Institutional Representative identified by full name, title, organization, telephone number, fax number, e-mail and mailing address,

5) The lead MSI partners including, NOAA programs laboratories and facilities, high schools, and community colleges, and,

6) The total federal funding being requested must be listed.

b. Abstract: It is critical that the abstract accurately describe the essential elements of the project being proposed. The abstract should include: a) Title--Use the exact title as it appears in the application, b) Investigators--List the names and affiliations of each investigator who will significantly contribute to the project. The Principal Investigator should be listed first followed by the Co-Principal Investigator that will assume the responsibility of carrying out the proposal in the absence of the Principal Investigator, c) Funding request for each year of the project as well as total funding requested, d) Project Period--Start and completion dates. Proposals should request a start date of **July 1, 2004**, e) Objectives, Methodology, and Rationale--This should include a concise statement of the objectives of the project, the scientific or educational methodology to be used, and the rationale for the work proposed.

c. Project Description

1) Introduction/Background/Justification: How will the MSI foster student careers, entrepreneurship opportunities and advanced academic study directly related to the NOAA sciences? What is the problem or issue being addressed directly related to the NOAA sciences and what is its scientific, technical, educational, or socioeconomic importance to the region or nation?

2) Technical Plan: What are the goals, objectives, and anticipated approach of the proposed project? While a detailed work plan is not expected, the proposal should present evidence that there has been thoughtful consideration of the approach to the problem under study. What capabilities do the partners possess that will benefit the project, faculty member(s) and students? How will partners be selected and what is the role of each partner? How will students be selected to participate in the program? How will students be encouraged to pursue science tracks in high school and how will students be guided to continue their academic training at the college/university levels in NOAA sciences?

3) Output/Anticipated Benefits: What measures will be used to evaluate the outcome of the proposed project? Upon completion of the project, what are the anticipated benefits to the MSI, its students, NOAA and the environmental community? How will students be tracked to monitor their academic progress?

d. Budget and Budget Justification: Form SF424A Budget Information Non-Construction Programs and budget justification narrative are required. There should be an annual budget for each year of the project as well as a cumulative budget for the entire project. Subcontracts should include a separate budget justification page that itemizes all budget items in sufficient detail to enable reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested. The budget must include at least twenty-five percent [25%] directed to student support, including travel, to attend relevant conferences, site visits to NOAA programs, laboratories, facilities or other training experiences. The budget must include sufficient travel funds directed for the Principal Investigator to participate in the NOAA Educational Partnership Program annual meeting and the Grants Workshop.

(Please see the NOAA budget guidelines at <http://www.ofa.noaa.gov/%7Egrants/appkit.html>)

e. Standard Application Forms: Proposals submitted in response to this solicitation must be complete and submitted in accordance with instructions in the standard NOAA Grants Application package. .

1) Standard Forms 424. Application for Federal Assistance; SF424A Budget Information Non-Construction Programs; SF424B Assurances Non-Construction, (Rev 7-03). Please note that both the Principal Investigator and an administrative contact should be identified in Section 5 of the SF424 or Section 10, applicants should enter ``11.481'' for the CFDA Number and ``NOAA Educational Partnership Program with Minority Serving Institutions'' for the title. The form must contain the original signature of an authorized representative of the applying institution.

2) Primary Applicant Certifications. All primary applicants must submit a completed Form CD-511, ``Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; Drug-Free Workplace Requirements and Lobbying,'' and the following explanations are hereby provided:

(i) Non-Procurement Debarment and Suspension. Prospective participants (as defined at 15 CFR Part 26, Section 105) are subject to 15 CFR Part 26, ``Non-Procurement Debarment and Suspension'' and the related section of the certification form prescribed above applies;

(ii) Drug-Free Workplace. Grantees (as defined at 15 CFR Part 26, Section 605) are subject to 15 CFR Part 26, Subpart F, ``Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants)'' and the related section of the certification form prescribed above applies;

(iii) Anti-Lobbying. Persons (as defined at 15 CFR Part 28, Section 105) are subject to the lobbying provisions of 31 U.S.C. 1352, ``Limitation on use of appropriated funds to influence certain Federal contracting and financial transactions,'' and the lobbying section of the certification form prescribed above applies to applications/bids for grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts for more than \$100,000, and loans and loan guarantees for more than \$150,000; and

(iv) Anti-Lobbying Disclosures. Any applicant that has paid or will pay for lobbying using any funds must submit an SF-LLL, ``Disclosure of Lobbying Activities,'' as required under 15 CFR Part 28, Appendix B.

3) Lower Tier Certifications. Recipients shall require applicants/bidders for sub grants, contracts, subcontracts, or other lower tier covered transactions at any tier under the award to submit, if applicable, a completed Form CD-512, ``Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion-Lower Tier Covered Transactions and Lobbying'' and disclosure form, SF-LLL, ``Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.'' ORM CD-512 is intended for the use of recipients and should not be transmitted to the Department of Commerce

(DOC). SF-LLL submitted by any tier recipient or sub recipient should be submitted to DOC in accordance with the instructions contained in the award document.

The following information is not included in the 20 page limitation:

f. Literature Citation: Literature cited should be included here.

g. Current and Pending Support: Applicants must provide information on all their current and pending Federal support for ongoing projects and proposals, including potential subsequent funding in the case of continuing grants. The proposed project and all other projects or activities using Federal assistance or that requires a portion of time of the principal investigator or other senior personnel should be included. The relationship between the proposed project and these other projects should be described, and the number of person-months per year to be devoted to the projects must be stated.

h. Curriculum Vitae two pages maximum per all Principal and Co-Principal Investigator(s) involved in carrying out the proposal.

i. Letters of commitment from partnering organizations. Letters of commitment from partners must be included. The letters from partnering organizations should describe the type of commitment, identify key participants, and state their role in the project.

3. Submission Dates and Times

The deadline for receipt of proposals at the EPP Office is 5:00 p.m., eastern time, March 15, 2004. Proposals received after the deadline will be returned to the sender without further consideration. The EPP/MSI Office determines whether an application has been submitted before the deadline by date/time stamping the applications as they are physically received in the EPP office.

4. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

5. Funding Restrictions

____No special restrictions apply.

6. Other Submission Requirements

_____All applicants are to submit hard copy proposals only. Facsimile transmissions and electronic mail submission of proposals will not be accepted. The hard copies may be submitted by postal mail, commercial delivery service, or hand-delivery. Proposals must be submitted to: Jewel G. Linzey, Program Manager, Environmental Entrepreneurship Program, Educational Partnership Program, 1315 East West Highway, SSMC III, Room 10725, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the program goals (15%). This ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, regional, state, tribal or local activities.
2. Technical/Scientific Merit (15%). This assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives.
3. Overall qualifications of applicants (10%). This ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training facilities and administrative resources to accomplish the project. For this competition, projects must include the effective use of role models and mentors from academia and partner organizations.
4. Project cost (20%). The budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. For this competition, projects are required to have at least 50% in direct student support and multi-year participation by students in projects. No more than 20% of total funds may be provided to a non-MSI.-
5. Outreach and Education (40%). This assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources.

B. Review and Selection Process

Proposals must be received in the EPP/MSI program office

by March 15, 2004 in order to be reviewed by NOAA. Once a full proposal is received by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. All proposals will be evaluated and scored individually in accordance with the assigned weights of the above evaluation criteria by an independent peer panel review comprising representatives of government, industry and academia. Both Federal and non-Federal experts in the field may be used in this process.

The panel members shall rate the proposals using the evaluation criteria and percentage weights provided above. The individual peer panelist scores shall be averaged for each application and presented to the program officer. No consensus advice will be given by the independent peer review panel.

The merit review ratings shall provide a rank order of the proposals. Recommendations for funding are then forwarded to the selecting official. In making the final selection, the Director will award in rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on factors listed below in C. Investigators may be asked to modify objectives, work plans or budgets levels, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. When a decision is made (whether an award or declination), summaries of review panel deliberation, if any, will be made available to the proposer upon request. Declined applications will be held by the EPP/MSI Office for the required 3 years in accordance with the current retention requirements, and then destroyed.

C. Selection Factors

The selecting official shall award in rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon items 1, 2a., and 3 of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding
2. Balance/distribution of funds
 - a. Geographically
 - b. By type of institutions
 - c. By type of partners
 - d. By research areas
 - e. By project types
3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/federal agencies
4. Program priorities and policy factors as set out in Section I.B.
5. Applicant's prior award performance
6. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted group

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of proposals will occur during February 2004, and funding should begin in July 2004 for approved projects. July 1, 2004, should be used as the proposed start date on proposals, unless otherwise directed by the Program Officer.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices

The notice of award is signed by the NOAA Grants Officer and is the authorizing document. It is provided by postal mail to the appropriate business office of the recipient organization.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements published in the Federal Register on October 1, 2001 (66 FR 49917), as amended by the Federal Register notice published on October 30, 2002 (67 FR 66109). You may obtain a copy of these by notices by contacting the agency contact(s) under Section VII, or by going to the website at: www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/aces140.html.

3. Reporting

All financial and progress reports shall be submitted in triplicate (one original and two copies). Financial reports are to be submitted to the NOAA Grants Officer and Performance (technical) reports are to be submitted to the NOAA program officer. Program and financial reports are to be submitted semi-annually.

VII. Agency Contact(s)

Contact: Jewel G. Linzey, Program Manager, Environmental Entrepreneurship Program, (301) 713-9437 ext. 118, facsimile (301) 713-9465, e-mail Jewel.Griffin-Linzey@noaa.gov